

CHARTIST

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BENN AND FOOT MUST LEAD FIGHT AS BIG BUSINESS CALLS THE TUNE

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT has surrendered. Without a fight, it has bowed to the dictates of Big Business. Denis Healey's incomes policy—backed by statutory reserve powers, together with the threat of mass unemployment, is the beginning of the greatest attack on the working class since the war.

Inflation is now running at around 40 per cent. Healey's plans to cut wage increases to a maximum of £6 means that working-class families must suffer a wage-cut of about 15 per cent. At the same time, there are now over a million unemployed.

But still the employers and the Tory Party are not satisfied. They are demanding massive cuts in public expenditure. And the Labour Government will no doubt oblige by hammering the services in our schools and hospitals.

All this is a far cry from Labour's promises in the 1974 elections.

- Gone are the plans to extend public ownership into profitable sectors of the economy.

- Gone are the pledges to defend the living standards of working people.

- Gone is the promise to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power in favour of the working class.

- Gone in fact is any pretence that this is a socialist government, or that it is anything other than the willing tool of the CBI.

retreats

And yet despite all these retreats and outright betrayals, left-wing cabinet ministers such as Benn and Foot have silently acquiesced in the Government's onslaught. They have stood by without a word of public protest as Labour begins to repeat the catastrophes of the 1960s. They have refused to openly challenge the Wilson-Healey leadership that is digging the grave of this Labour Government and paving the way for the return of a right-wing Tory administration.

The trade union movement is confused. It is uncertain how to fight the present attacks and is torn by its instinctive loyalty to the Labour Government - a loyalty so cynically abused by Healey, TUC chief Murray and miners' leader Gormley. Trade unionists up and down the country, disappointed and angry at Labour's record, are desperately seeking an alternative leadership and an alternative programme of action. They are

looking to Benn and Foot for an answer, and are receiving no reply.

Tony Benn at the 1973 Labour Party Conference told us that the crisis of capitalism must be the occasion for Labour to implement its socialist pledges, and not the excuse for retreating on them. Benn was dead right. For too long workers have been forced to sacrifice their living standards and accept broken promises as the crisis goes from bad to worse. But fine speeches from Benn are no longer enough. The time for action is now.

resign

Together with Foot, Benn must resign immediately from the Government and take absolutely no responsibility for the attacks being waged on the working class.

- He must appeal to the ranks of the Labour Party and trade union movement to oppose the incomes policy, and give his full support to those sections of the movement, such as the Yorkshire miners, who have already declared their opposition.

- He must appeal to the TUC to reject the pleas of Murray and Jack Jones, and to refuse to co-operate with the incomes policy.

- He must spell out a programme of action against inflation, fight for an extension of the threshold system, with cost of living clauses to be written into every wage agreement, to provide full compensation against rising prices.

- He must lead the fight against unemployment, openly support those workers who occupy their factories in defence of jobs, and fight for work sharing with no loss of pay.

- He must oppose all cuts in public expenditure and attacks on the quality of service in schools and hospitals.

- Above all, he must struggle to oust the right-wing Healey-Wilson leadership of the Labour Party, and to fight the right wing at all levels in the labour movement.

Millions of trade unionists are seeking a way out of the present impasse. Benn and Foot must stand up and be counted.

by Graham Bash



Reg Prentice entering meeting which ousted him.

NEWHAM DITCHES PRENTICE

TONY KELLY COMMENTS

ON Wednesday, 23 July, a chapter in an unparalleled struggle to remove the notoriously anti-working class Labour MP and Secretary for Overseas Development, Reg Prentice, came to a triumphant close. By 29 votes to 19, the Special General Council meeting of Newham North East CLP, voted that Prentice should resign at the next General Election. Prentice has the right to appeal to the LP National Executive Committee (NEC). In the past the NEC has not vetoed a democratically arrived at decision by a local Labour Party membership.

The "Newham affair" has now become a test case in the struggle for democracy in the Labour Party.

Tony Kelly, Assistant Secretary of Newham N.E. CLP, has been the prime victim of the muck raking press witch-hunt to discredit the anti-Prentice majority in Newham N.E. By spreading talk of plots and conspiracies, the gutter-press, like the Daily Mail sought to create the myth that a tiny group of "extremists" had "infiltrated" the CLP overnight to oust Prentice. The truth is that the fight against Prentice started back in 1971. Since then Prentice has consistently stirred the anger of the whole trade union movement and rank and file Labour Party members with his outspoken attacks on trade unionists and his open espousal of coalition

politics during his joint campaign with the Tories for the Common Market and after.

The Chartist spoke to Tony Kelly about the issues at stake in the anti-Prentice fight, and the background to the struggle. He saw two issues at stake. "First of all there's the simple local issue: has the Constituency Labour Party got a right, or not, to exercise its political views in the selection of an MP? In the case of a sitting member does it have a right to express its political views by reselecting if it considers it should do so. The difficulty we found in Newham was that as soon as it was suggested we should do so, then all of a sudden the rule book was wrong!

"The second issue, something that is happening all through the Labour Party, is the reconsideration of what sort of people we want as Members of Parliament—do we want people who will put a socialist programme, or do we want people who will tinker about with the capitalist economy. I think Newham N.E. made up its mind it wanted a socialist MP."

(Continued on page 7)

£300 FIGHTING FUND

The new fighting fund has got off to a reasonable start—£40 in the first month. With five months left we urge all our supporters to rush contributions to Chartist Publications, 82 Loughborough Rd, Brixton, SW9.

THE CHARTIST

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Wilson's £6 freeze—doing the Tories dirty work

LESS THAN nine months ago this Labour Government was elected on a pledge to repeal the Tories Phase 3 pay laws and all vestiges of state wage and trade union control. It is now hotfoot on the road to introducing—with the full consent of the Tories—a revamped incomes policy.

The £6 wage limit will mean direct cuts of up to 20 per cent in working class living standards. As Labour millionaire and Minister, Harold Lever affirmed: "On aggregate this (the £6 maximum wage rise) amounts to about half the rise in the cost of living". Further drastic cuts are planned in the 'social wage'—health, education, housing, etc—when Chancellor Healey's public spending cutbacks take effect.

'Reserve Powers'

Worse still, the unknown statutory "reserve powers" could well mean gaol for workers who defy the wage freeze. All this from a Labour government elected on a radical reform programme. Gone is the talk of maintaining living standards. Gone is the promise of wealth and power redistribution. Gone the promise to restore full employment.

The £6 wage control law has now placed the Labour Government squarely on the road that led to defeat in 1970. Wilson's pledge not to introduce a legal incomes policy, along with the whole manifesto is now barely visible in the dust of Labour's headlong retreat before the dictates of the City and CBI.

The whole deal has only been made possible by the squalid collaboration and virtual abandonment of free collective bargaining by the majority of the TUC.

The Tribune Left in Parliament could muster less than 30 votes out of its 80 strong membership to vote against the measures. Michael Foot squirms with his conscience deliberately forgetting that whether 'voluntary' or 'compul-

sory' a wage freeze means the same for working class incomes. Benn is conspicuous by his silence.

The Labour leadership justify the draconian measures on three main arguments. Every one of them is shot through with holes. Firstly, Chancellor Healey and Co. tell us the measures are necessary to stop runaway inflation now accelerating at a rate of 40 per cent a year (over the last three months). But there is to be no price freeze and food subsidies are being lifted. Instead, the employers argument that wages cause inflation is accepted. But when the Tories froze wages in 1973 prices continued to rise! In Chile, since the bloody coup in 1973 wages have been cut by a third, but the cost of living index rose 376 per cent last year and by May of this year had risen a further 125 per cent. The truth is, wages are chasing prices and every housewife struggling with her weekly budget knows it.

Profit Rates

The capitalists raise prices in an effort to maintain declining profit rates at the expense of wages. Instead of attacking workers' living standards, Labour should be exposing the profiteering of the capitalists by abolishing business secrets and extending nationalisation into profitable sectors, as the manifesto promised.

Then we are told the pay laws will stop unemployment. But on his own admission, Healey tells us the package will increase the jobless by 20,000 or 30,000.

They will join over a million workers on the dole—the highest number unemployed since 1940—and the quarter of a million on short time working. The Tory business journal 'The Economist' is perhaps more honest when it tells its exclusive readership that 'unemployment is now set to rise towards two million, perhaps beyond'. Details leaked at the end of July from official government estimates of unemployment confirm this picture by forecasting 1½m jobless by the middle of next year. Healey's twisted logic cannot hide the fact that when workers' purchasing power is reduced, less is consumed, more companies go bankrupt, and unemployment soars.

Fiction World

Thirdly, Wilson, Jones and Co. say the £6 wage freeze will help the low paid. Such talk takes the Labour Government into the fiction world of 'Alice in Wonderland' where pigs could fly. If inflation is running at 40% a £6 increase is hardly going to improve the plight of the low-paid. With five million workers earning less than the TUC minimum wage of £35, a £6 rise after tax can only mean lower pay for workers when the consequent loss of earnings-related benefits is taken into account.

To cap it all, at a recent cabinet meeting, Healey indicated plans to cut public spending programmes by a massive £2-£3 billions before 1979. So much for helping the poor.

Mass unemployment, 1930's poverty levels and drastic cuts in working class living standards amount to a reversion to full-scale Tory policies. That is why Heath and Whitelaw are falling over themselves to support the Wilson government.

All the talk of 'sacrifice' is even further underlined as a nauseating fraud by Wilson's £24 a week pay award to MPs and the nationalised industry heads demand for the topping up of their meagre £500 a week salaries by another £150.

No worker should be deceived about the aim of the £6 freeze. As the City's mouth-piece, the Financial Times, stated, "the policy is designed...as the White Paper makes clear...to allow a large recovery in profits".

Occasion

Instead of using the inability of capitalism to provide for living standards as the occasion for forging ahead with the socialist pledges in the Manifesto, the Labour parliamentary cretins have launched a calculated drive to shackle workers with the burden of the capitalist profitability crisis. Instead of harnessing the class unity created by the miners' strike to defeat the Tories and their system, Wilson resorts to divide and rule. Low paid are set against better paid. Unemployed are set against employed.

In every LP branch and management committee a fight must be launched to turn the tide of Wilson's betrayals. A leaf should be taken from the Newham N.E book. Every MP who refuses to fight for the Manifesto, conference decisions, and above all to openly challenge inside and outside parliament, the Wilson pay laws, must be removed.

A movement must be built now to ensure LP Conference and TUC congress reject these capitalist policies and forge a new leadership throughout the Labour movement.

WHY NO FIGHT FROM LABOUR LEFTS ?

NOTHING IS more pathetic than the present public heart searching of Michael Foot, Minister for Unemployment. Foot, who has built his whole career in the Labour Party as the keeper of the conscience of the Left now has the painful tasks of explaining the latest unemployment figures of over one million and piloting the compulsory/voluntary wage cutting legislation through the Commons. All this just ten months after the election of a Labour government on a programme of full employment and total opposition to legal pay restraint.

Even Foot's threatened resignation if legal powers are used to back the pay freeze carries little weight when one considers his role in formulating and guiding through these pay laws.

In this Foot is following in the footsteps of the other Tribunites in refusing to fight Wilson's Tory policies in the ranks of the T.U. and Labour movement. Unlike Jenkins who threatened to resign if Prentice was sacked after the referendum, the sackings of

By Geoff Bender

Judith Hart, Eric Heffer and Benn's demotion brought nothing more than a speech of protest from Judith Hart and a letter from the Tribunites to the prime minister, which even then was opposed by some of the Tribune Group.

Part of the problem has been the extremely mixed nature of the Tribune group, consisting of some 80 MPs. A small core are dedicated left-wing campaigners, a larger number are emotionally left wing but politically confused and some are simply fairweather left-wingers anxious to impress their constituencies. This is clear from the fact that out of these 80



only 30 voted against the new pay-laws, including Heffer, Hart, Hughes and Buchan, all ex-mini-

sters.

Another problem has been the refusal of the Tribunites to organise in the ranks of the Labour movement outside of Parliament against Labour's lurch to the right. Events in Newham show the willingness of the ranks of the Party for such a fight which would soon show who were the fighters and who were the fairweather socialists who had just tagged onto the Tribune banner as a flag of convenience.

However to fight Wilson's policies requires an alternative. Firstly and foremost, a demand that the Manifesto pledges on full employment, no wage controls and the extension of nationalisation into profitable sectors be honoured. But the Tribune programme by raising as a panacea import controls, the utopia of price control and cuts in defence spending is totally inadequate to meet the needs of the working class or to carry out these manifesto pledges. The danger with the policies of the Tribune group is that far from outlining a serious strategy for

fighting the economic crisis in the interests of the working class they play into the hands of the most reactionary section of Britain's capitalists. Import controls, for example, are a recipe for trade war and an attempt to shore up British capitalism against foreign competition. A completely utopian ambition. Similarly by talking of price controls which the experience with subsidies shows are unworkable in the current world situation—while ignoring the demand in the unions for automatic cost of living increases, the Tribunites ignore the real struggle.

The myopic nationalism and parliamentarianism of the Tribunites programme is both a result and a cause of their isolation from the day to day struggles of the working class.

While they refuse to mobilise the rank and file of the movement on a fighting programme they will be unable to wrest the leadership from the working class from the Wilsons, Healeys and Callaghans and forced to confine themselves to impotent protest.

Miners' leaders somersault on pay claim

GRAEME ATKINSON

"ONE MAN's wage increase could mean another man's ticket to the dole queue." Thus spake Labour leader, Harold Wilson at the Durham Miners Gala in July. He also said, "Yorkshire's pay rise could be Scotland's pit closure." Clearly, Wilson was campaigning for a "yes" vote in the miners forthcoming national ballot on the National Executive's acceptance of Labour's £6 maximum pay policy.

Already, Yorkshire and Kent miners—68,000 members of the NUM—have rejected any limitation of pay rises to £6 a week. So did the NUM Conference at Scarborough... a decision which the National Executive is desperately trying to overturn.

manoeuvres

The roots of this wages policy somersault are embedded in the manoeuvres that took place at the NUM Conference. There, the Yorkshire delegation led by Area President Arthur Scargill, took a resolution calling for £100 for coal-face workers, £85 for underground men and £80 for surface workers. The resolution also called for a ballot of members for industrial action if no satisfactory offer is made by November 1st. The demands are of course, anathema to the right wing led by union President Joe Gormley. From the minute the conference started, Gormley and his pals applied pressure for Yorkshire to accept a "compromise" which would sink the pay claim.

An hysterical atmosphere was built up to browbeat the militants. On the first day, Harold Wilson was slipped in to call for "moderation" and to blackmail the delegates with the threat of unemployment if they do not comply with Labour's policy.



ARTHUR SCARGILL

Said Wilson, "If ever coal becomes uncompetitive again, and this is true of any industry, then it begins its decline. The greater the uncompetitiveness, the faster the decline." He went on to warn that if inflation continued at its present rate, "no industry would be secure, no jobs safe." These words were aimed at the militants who listened to them in angry silence.

Next star turn was National Coal Board (NCB) chairman Derek Ezra, who indulged in his own little bit of blackmail with his statement that, "further major price increases would rapidly lose us markets, jeopardise our investment plans and reduce our employment prospects"... all sweet music to Gormley's ears.

With fulsome praise Gormley said Ezra had made an "excellent speech, excellently done, at the right time".

No fool, Gormley was consciously piling on the pressure. So were leading CP members of the NUM. While £400 a week Wilson and £300 a week Ezra were intimidating the delegates up front, Mick McGahey and his fellow Stalinists were hecktoring the Yorkshire delegation behind the scenes in a bid to get it to compromise on the £100 demand. Yorkshire had expected support from the other three left-wing areas, Scotland, South Wales and Kent. Along with the votes of Derbyshire and the Midlands, the Yorkshire resolution would have had an overall majority.

Compromise

This was not to be, because the leadership of these other delegations deserted and betrayed the Yorkshire miners... even though mandated to support the £100 demand. McGahey told Scargill and his delegation, "get the best compromise you can. It is better to look responsible than beaten." The Communist Party had ditched the £100 claim 4 days before the conference began, unknown to Scargill, who was then faced—two hours before the debate—with fighting alone or caving in. He caved in. The word "demand" was removed and the word "seek" substituted. Leading Nottinghamshire right-winger, Len Clarke, seconding the 'compromise' resolution 'seeking' a £100 a week could not conceal his glee at Scargill's demise. He lectured delegates: "You don't remove the word 'demand' and put in the word 'seek' and mean the same thing. We'll get the £100 when the country can afford it and not before." Scargill was beaten. The Wilsons', Ezras', Gormleys' and McGaheys' were triumphant.

Now the NUM leaders are committed to nothing. They have bags of room to sell-out whatever pay claim is finally concocted and have avoided

any pledge to strike action. Former 'left' Lawrence Daly showed where he stands by denouncing Scargill for insisting on a fight to win the £100 and firmly supporting the right wing and the beloved Social Contract Mark 2.

The thread that held the whole NUM leadership together in unprincipled unity was fear of a clash with the Labour Government, because this would raise questions other than wages. It would have meant war with Wilson's betrayal of Labour's Manifesto. Thus, the undoubted will of the miners to defend the Labour Government against the very Tories they kicked out was cynically turned into surrender to Wilson, who is actually carrying out a Tory wage control policy. There has been a major retreat. The fight back must begin now.

The Kent and Yorkshire rank and file decisions for a "no" vote to Wilson's £6 wage freeze in the coming NUM ballot must be taken up elsewhere. The Executive recommendation should be thrown out and a campaign launched to fight for the £100 demand. Yorkshire must be the powerhouse for this. A defeat in the ballot can poleaxe Gormley's and McGahey's "compromise" and can open up a real battle by the miners—still the vanguard of the working class—against Wilson's Tory policies. A battle corresponding to the real interests of trade unionists and Labour Party members and which would win widespread support.

A 'yes' vote however will only compound the retreat and substantially reinforce the right-wing throughout the labour movement. Above all, it will accelerate the NCB's drive towards more pit closures and further drastic pruning of the coal industry, no matter how much Ezra says about "expansion".

LEEDS: ACID TEST FOR CUTS FIGHT

by Graham Durham



Picket of Leeds Council, 25 June

AS DENIS Healey announces yet more plans for long-term cutbacks in public spending, the real implications of those cutbacks in public spending are being felt throughout the country. One of the worst-hit cities is Leeds where social services have been savaged in many critical areas. The first blow was struck when a badly-needed 512m extension to Leeds General Infirmary was scrapped and then, following massive opposition, postponed. This attack on the health services was followed up by Labour proposals to cut back spending—especially the provision of teachers—cutbacks in the financing of social work and cuts in grants to youth clubs.

Following widespread Labour defeats in the May City Council elections, the Tories gained control and immediately proposed further cuts of £4.8m, including £1.7m from the education budget. Although these proposals were defeated by joint Labour and Liberal votes, the Leeds Labour councillors remain collectively committed to imposing cuts. On July 12th, the Labour controlled Metro council increased bus-fares by 33% massively increasing the cost of reaching work and shopping centres.

Leeds, therefore, presents a grim warning of the erosion of hard-won, and already inadequate social services, certain to be

carried out by local authorities in response to further cuts announced by Healey and Environment Minister, Crosland. In Leeds, the cuts are in glaring contrast to the vast amount of money being pumped into projects such as the multi-million pound Pudsey-Dishforth motorway, and the new private hospital being constructed in the Roundhay area of the city.

The cuts have produced some sporadic working-class protests. Youth clubs staged a march in Leeds protesting against the cuts and the ATTI staged a half-day strike to lobby Leeds City Council on June 25th and were supported by many NUT members. In addition, NUPE shop-stewards have figures prominently in the fight against the Roundhay private hospital. But if a real movement against the cutbacks is to be built then joint action between public sector unions is essential.

Here too the fight in the Labour party is crucial. Many Labour members and supporters including some councillors are genuinely worried about the cutbacks but faced with the reality presented by the council officials and local press see little alternative to obeying central govern-

ment directives. Militants in the unions and Labour party must have a clear programme of action to meet these problems. Demands should include:

(i)...Leeds Labour party must be urged to fight a campaign of deficit financing following the tactics of the Clay Cross Council in fighting the Housing Finance Act. A refusal to make any cuts or to increase rates or charges would be the best way to expose the real nature of the government's attack.

(ii)...In support of such action the initiative must be seized from ratepayers associations and public meetings in conjunction with Labour movement organisations must be held to explain and rally support for the fight against the cuts.

(iii)...A Leeds Trade Union-Labour conference against the cuts must be organised and co-ordination of all strike action and protests must be made a high priority.

The fight in Leeds will prove an acid test for other areas soon to suffer cutbacks. Militants must join together to wage a fight against the entrenched bureaucrats in the Leeds Trade Unions and Labour Party.

WHAT IS HAPPENING in Portugal? In Britain and throughout Europe, trade unionists and socialists are concerned at the course which the revolution seems to be taking. Portugal is now ruled by a triumvirate of Generals, without any pretence of democracy at all. A purge of "moderates" in the ruling Armed Forces Movement is under way. Meanwhile, troops and officers opposed to the left-wing AFM regime are reported to be waiting under arms for the moment to strike back. A civil war situation may be being prepared. All this is against a grim international background of civil war in Angola and a growing Western economic blockade of Portugal. What sense can be made of the situation? And whose side should we be on?

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

In Britain, the Labour Party leaders have come out strongly against the military regime and in support of the Socialist Party of Portugal. Is this correct? The Socialist Party is championing "parliamentary democracy" as against "military rule". But where does socialism come in? The recent period of rule by the Armed Forces Movement, whatever else one may say, has allowed to develop a far greater extension of nationalization and a more powerful movement for workers' control than any parliamentary democracy has ever done in the history of Europe. Shouldn't socialists in the Labour Party acknowledge this?

But it looks as if the choice at present being offered to the workers of Portugal is between two things, each of which seems a contradiction in terms: democracy without socialism—or socialism without democracy. There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of workers feel cheated by this choice. They want democracy—but real democracy for the working class, not the parliamentary pretence which passes for democracy in the capitalist West. And, as the election results earlier showed, they want socialism—but not rule by military bureaucrats accountable to no-one, however "socialist" their intentions.

DEMOCRACY & SOCIALISM

The CHARTIST stands one hundred per cent for both socialism and democracy. Each is impossible without the other. We are completely opposed to the bureaucratic perversions of socialism prevailing in states such as the USSR or those of Eastern Europe, just as we insist on more than the travesties of "democracy" which prevail in the countries of the capitalist West. In this we stand four square with the great bulk of Portugal's working class.

But it is not enough simply to be "for" something. It is necessary to know how to fight for it.

At present, a life-and-death struggle is taking place in Portugal between two opposed political camps. Ranged behind the Socialist Party's campaign against 'dictatorship' are not only some workers who rightly resent military

~ Chronology of past years' events ~

SEPTEMBER 10: Spinoza appeals to the 'silent majority' after a summer of strikes and demonstrations.

SEPTEMBER 28: "Night of the barricades" as 40,000 workers and students demonstrate in Lisbon to prevent rally of 'silent majority' taking place. After 3 days of demonstrations Spinoza resigns and is replaced by Costa Gomes. Soldiers and sailors join in victory march.

MARCH 11, 1975: Spinoza with support of some paratroopers attempts right-wing coup. He is defeated by the overwhelming opposition of the working class and the rank and file of AFM. COPCON and 1st Artillery Regiment with armed workers arrest officers and capitalists.

Bank workers strike. Banks nationalised. Further nationalisations.

APRIL 11: Six main parties sign pact with AFM guaranteeing the military a place in the government reg-

ardless of election results.

APRIL 16: Nationalisation of transport, steel, electrical and petroleum industries.

APRIL 25: Elections held. Majority for workers' parties. Socialists 38%, Communists 13%, MDP 4%, Liberal PFD 25%.

MAY 25: Closure of S. P. paper 'Republica' by print workers.

JUNE 17: Supreme Revolutionary Council meets, rejects ultimatum of COPCON presented by Carvalho for 'dictatorship of proletariat' government of workers committees and 'peoples militia'. SRC swing right denouncing arming of civilians; politicisation of armed forces.

JULY 4: Proletarian Revolutionary Party-Revolutionary Brigades march with COPCON in support of Carvalho.

JULY 5: Radical land reform adopted.

JULY 9: SRC accepts need for 'peoples' councils and popular assembly.

JULY 11: Socialist Party resigns from the Government, in protest against Carvalho's plans.

JULY 13: EEC reimpose custom duties on Portuguese textiles.

JULY 16: EEC heads refuse aid to Portugal until 'democracy' established.

JULY 20: Socialist Party and Popular Democrats lead demonstrations against AFM's plans and the CP, calling for Goncalves resignation. CP offices ransacked in Northern towns.

JULY 25: 'Troika' established consisting of Costa Gomes, Goncalves and Carvalho who has just returned from Castro's Cuba. Although Costa Gomes has asserted that the revolution has outpaced some of the people and a period of consolidation is necessary the troika nevertheless represents a further move left.

WHICH WAY FOR PORTUGAL

rule. Much more powerful and important in this campaign are the Popular Democrats, Christian Democrats, fascists and ex-fascists, employers, disgruntled white settlers from Africa, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, supporters of Spinoza in the Army and foreign powers and organisations such as the U.S Government, NATO and the Common Market. These forces are using the banner of the Socialist Party as a 'cover', because the political climate in Portugal at present is so far to the left that they dare not show their true faces to the working class. The central immediate demand of the Socialist Party leaders has been for the removal of Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves, whom they accuse of being too "pro-communist."

GONCALVES' POSITION

Before we look at the opposite political camp in the struggle, let us ask ourselves a question. For the time being, Goncalves' position has been confirmed by the assembly of the Armed Forces Movement. But supposing the socialists had their way and Goncalves was removed what would this really mean? Socialist leader Soares hopes that the premier will be replaced by a military figure pledged to transfer power from the Army to a basically civilian government responsible to the Constituent Assembly. A parliamentary system would be allowed to flourish with the support of the Governments of America and the west.

Now it has to be said that this is simply not a possibility. Parliamentary democracy can only work under certain specific conditions. There must be an economically powerful capitalist class, a thriving capitalist economy, and a strong, organised working class prepared to allow its leaders merely to seek reforms under the capitalist system. None of these conditions exist in

Portugal, or could possibly exist in the foreseeable future. As in all relatively poor and backward countries, capitalism could survive in Portugal, if at all, only under a ruthless right-wing military regime.

AFM—NOT HOMOGENOUS

The Armed Forces Movement is not a homogeneous whole. It is deeply split along lines reflecting the class contradictions within society itself. Many elements, particularly among the officers, stand well to the right of Goncalves. These elements are those to whom Soares is now appealing for support. But while such officers may promise "pluralism" and "democracy" for all they are worth, such promises are completely valueless. Were the Socialist Party leaders to succeed in forcing the resignation of Goncalves, the result would not be a transfer of power to the Constituent Assembly. It would simply be a continuation of military rule, but on a more right-wing basis. Such a 'victory' would prove cruelly disappointing to those workers who support the Socialist Party out of a desire for democratic socialism. It would enhance the power, not of the Constituent Assembly, but of those among the military who are aiming at a right wing coup and a Latin-American style capitalist military dictatorship.



Vasco Goncalves

Ranged in the present conflict behind Goncalves and the left-wing of the AFM are the Communist Party, most of the political groups to the left of the Communists, most of the politicised leftward moving soldiers and sailors and the strongest, most organised and most militant sections of the working class. There may be little unity between the leaders of the various elements in this camp, but what they do share is a fear that any concessions to Soares, the Popular Democrats or the 'moderates' in the AFM would provide an opening for the return to power of Spinoza, or of military elements close to him, in which case not only the revolution but their own necks would be in dire risk.

THIRD ALTERNATIVE

But between these two camps, is there not a third alternative the alternative of genuine socialist democracy? There is. But it can arise only out of the deepening and extension of the existing revolutionary process, not out of its defeat. The enemies of socialist democracy in Portugal cannot be dealt with all at once. They must be defeated in a certain order. Already the left AFM leaders have been forced to go much further than they would like in surrendering control within industry and the Armed Forces to ordinary workers, soldiers and sailors. They have tried to gain control—but at the same time lean upon and even support—the embryonic workers' and soldiers councils which have begun to be set up as an alternative form of democracy to the Constituent Assembly. They have had to do this precisely in order to be able to defeat Spinoza and the threat posed by Soares and the Popular Democrats. If there is one thing which the Communist Party leaders fear more than a thousand Constituent Assemblies, it is a system of real democracy for



Soldiers and workers demonstrating for workers' power in Lisbon

PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION ?

Chris Knight

the working class, to the extent that workers' councils have already been set up in the course of the struggle against the capitalist backers of Soares, the left AFM officers and Communist Party leaders have had to pre-empt the appearance of the one thing in society which developed fully, could threaten not only to undermine their own bureaucratic rule, but that of the Kremlin, Eastern European and Chinese Stalinists as well.

INTERNATIONALISM

But this brings us to the question of internationalism. In the long run democracy of any sort—even socialist democracy—is impossible within the context of the poverty and backwardness of Portugal. The masses of Portuguese workers and peasants will not support a revolution under which their material living standards actually fall. They will turn against their own state, no matter how benevolent the intentions of their leaders. For a real socialist democracy to flourish there must be an abundance of economic wealth. But this presupposes the functioning of Portuguese industry and agriculture within the framework of a European and international economy planned and geared to working peoples needs. Instead of this, Portugal is now being faced with economic sabotage by the Common Market countries and the United States. If this sabotage is allowed to succeed, it cannot be long before large sections of the Portuguese workers, peasants and soldiers are completely demoralised by growing inflation, unemployment, and poverty. The ground would soon be prepared for a successful right-wing military coup and the drowning of the Portuguese revolution in blood.

Already living standards and employment in Portugal are falling, and this is an important cause of the growing popularity of the AFM among quite wide sections of the population. It is

probable that the AFM regime will soon seek aid from the Soviet Union. Will such aid be forthcoming? Soares is banking on the treachery of the Kremlin bureaucracy in this respect, and he may well be right. On May 22nd at a news conference in Lisbon's Hotel Altis he declared:

"We do not want to install a socialism of poverty here! No we certainly do not want to reduce the standard to living of the Portuguese people! And how are we going to solve these problems? Are we aiming for a 'Cuban-type' solution, that is, a Cuban model? Then we should know who is going to foot the bill. In the case of Cuba we know that it was the Soviet Union. So we need to know whether the Soviet Union is prepared to pay such a bill for us. We have good reason to doubt it".

"STRINGS"

Soares argues, of course, for economic reliance on the USA and the Common Market countries, concealing for the moment the well-known fact that the "strings" attached would be a full guarantee of capitalist property rights in Portugal—i.e. a betrayal and overturn of the gains of the revolution.

In actual fact, Soares' perspective of Soviet inaction could possibly prove a miscalculation. If the left AFM regime were to prove sufficiently stable, and if it were prepared to crack down hard enough on "Trotskyism"—i.e. to suppress such democratic workers' councils as have developed, along with all internationalist attempts to spread the revolution into Spain and southern Europe as a whole—the Kremlin could decide it was a "safe bet" and provide economic and military aid.

The Socialist Party leaders are correct to oppose the concessions to Stalinism such a course would require. But instead



MARIO SOARES

of the alternative of cringing before NATO and the EEC they should base their demands on a third possibility. That would be, not to beg, but to force the USSR to give aid, using the leverage the international labour movement can exert, applying this boldly by fighting for social revolution in Spain and the West and political revolution in the East. If the present "left" leaders of the AFM were real socialists, they would link demands to the Soviet Union for aid with, firstly, the fullest support for and accountability to genuinely democratic workers' councils in Portugal and, secondly, an internationalist revolutionary foreign policy founded on the interests not of this or that so-called "communist" government but of the world working class. If one thing is certain, it is that the AFM leaders will not take this course. Nevertheless, there are many indications that the Spanish revolution is about to break out. This could completely upset the calculations of both the AFM leaders and the Kremlin and create an extremely fluid situation.

In Portugal, it is not inconceivable—especially in a civil war situation, with the arming of the working class—that the left AFM leaders and Stalinists might go further along the road to estab-

lishing an unstable, but bureaucratically controlled workers' state. Nonetheless, the overthrow of capitalist property in Portugal would immeasurably strengthen the Spanish working class, especially since, conversely, the collapse of the Franco regime would enormously strengthen those in Portugal fighting for internationalism and workers' democracy. To support the Socialist Party in its present campaigns can only strengthen the counter-revolution. Behind Soares' honeyed phrases about "democracy" the guns of Spinoist reaction and the exile rightist army (the ELP) are gathering. Any defeat for the Communists or left AFM leaders by Spinoist forces would not weaken but strengthen the hold of Stalinism over the world labour movement as a whole. In the present conflict in Portugal, we must stand on the same side of the barricades as the left-wing sections of the AFM. We must do all possible to ensure that the forces behind them defeat the threat from the right.

STRENGTHEN

Precisely to strengthen the the fight against reaction, Soares must be robbed of the opportunities he now has to identify the revolutionary camp with the executioners of democracy. This does not mean ceding power to the Constituent Assembly. It does mean ceding power to councils of soldiers', sailors' and workers' delegates. What is required is not the concentration of political power into the hands of three Generals answerable to no section of the working class. Centralization in itself is certainly necessary, but the central organs of power must be answerable to a genuine workers' democracy. The existing workers' councils and factory committees must be given power not only locally, in the factories, but over the whole economy and state. Where the power is not given, it must be seized, and already this seizure must be prepared.

WORKERS' COUNCILS

To this end, the existing workers' councils must be enormously expanded, so that they embrace all sections of industry, agriculture and the armed forces. Armed workers' militias must be built in co-operation with COPCON and the left AFM but answerable only to the workers' councils. In these councils, each delegate must be subject to immediate right of re-call from below, so that no privileged bureaucratic caste can arise. Voting should take place on the basis of party affiliation, with no artificial exclusions of parties, the only condition being that each party must agree to work through the system, submitting to majority verdicts and not attempting to impose its will on the councils by force. At present, this would exclude the Socialist Party, since it is opposed to the councils as such, and is inciting their violent disbandment by "moderates" in the Armed Forces. The maximum efforts must be made, however, to bring the Socialist Party into the framework of the workers' democracy.

THE UNSTABLE REGIME bequeathed to the people of Argentina by the late President General Juan Peron has been shocked by the country's general strike of last month. The strike, a 48 hour long protest called by the executive council of the 3.5 million strong General Labour Confederation or CGT (Argentinian TUC), brought out tens of thousands of workers in the main industrial centres of Cordoba, La Plata, Santa Fe, Rosario, San Lorenzo and Bahia Blanco. In the capital city of Buenos Aires a massive demonstration of trade unionists crowded into the square in front of the Presidential Palace. Beating drums, the determined strikers demanded an end to the right wing, anti-working class policies of the Argentinian President, Isabel Peron, wife of the late General and founder of the Peronista movement.

overwhelming

The mass general strike has been an overwhelming success. It was called in order to ensure the defeat of the 'shock measures' taken by the Peronista economic ministries which were designed to throw the whole burden of Argentina's current economic crisis onto the backs of the working class. With inflation running at over 80 per cent yearly, a budget deficit of £2,700 millions, a foreign debt of £4,100 millions, Argentina, until recently the most prosperous nation in Latin America, has over the last twelve months come close to seeing the end of all political, economic and social order in the country. In response to this situation the supposedly pro-'peoples' Peronista government has swung to the far right wing in all its policies. Acting mainly under the influence of

ARGENTINA GENERAL STRIKE SMASHES PERON'S 'SHOCK MEASURES'

by Don Flynn

a Rasputin-like figure, the astrologer-mystic Social Welfare Secretary, Jose Lopez Riga, the crash programme of 'shock measures' was announced.

These measures included a 50 per cent devaluation of the peso and a near tripling of petrol prices. In the wake of the rampant inflation which has been speeded up through these government measures, the working class was to take wage increases of no more than 45 per cent. This massive drop in living standards has been temporarily averted by the winning of wage increases of over 100 per cent. The general strike and the wave of political class struggle action it sparked off has forced the government to completely dump its policies. On top of this, the general strike has forced the removal from the cabinet of the hated Lopez Riga, together with another leading right winger, Economy Minister Celestino Rodrigo.

achievement

The success of the mass working class action represents an enormous achievement through which a complete break with the class collaborationist Peronista movement can be forced. But this can only be achieved if the entire labour movement is alert to the dangers inherent in the present climate of Latin American politics. Ever since the Chilean army butchered the leftist regime of



ISABEL PERÓN & LÓPEZ REGA (RIGHT) IN BUENOS AIRES

Salvador Allende in Chile, Latin America has been enveloped in a wave of militaristic reaction. The working class in Argentina now directly confronts this danger.

Already there is clear evidence of the implication of the Peronista ministers in the activity of the notorious "Argentina Anti-Communist Alliance" (AAA) which has claimed responsibility for over 300 murders and kidnappings of socialists and militant trade unionists and other prominent left wingers. One of the reasons that Lopez Riga left the country for Madrid so soon after his downfall was because of the threat of legal action against his own involvement in the AAA. Meanwhile, the Argentinian army, which has seized power from civilian governments three times in the past twenty years, is known to be dissatisfied with the current

situation.

The removal of the ineffective Isabel Peron for convenient health reasons, is expected within the immediate future. What will follow is a power struggle between the right wing military together with upper crust Peronista and the 'moderate' Peronista leadership of the CGT.

The mass of workers in the country are rapidly becoming disillusioned with the hope of progress through the nationalist reformist ideas of the late General Peron.

The labour movement in this Latin American country will in the coming weeks and months be fully alert and ready to fight back against any offensive against these democratic rights. It is the duty of the labour movement in Britain to be ready to campaign alongside them,

THE RIGHT to lobby MPs at their constituency surgeries came under attack last month when police officers attempted to obstruct supporters of the Troops Out Movement (TOM) from raising the question of the immediate withdrawal of the British troops from the north of Ireland with Labour MPs. In London's St. Pancras North constituency it took the personal intervention of MP Jock Stallard to ensure the TOM supporters were not harassed by the police. After discussing with the delegation for an hour Stallard escorted them from his office to make sure that they were not interfered with by the uniformed and plain-clothes officers who had previously approached him asking for the names and addresses of the lobbyists.

Police intervened

In another incident the police intervened in a fair organised by the Turnham Green Labour Party in West London. Although the TOM had been invited to attend the fair, police tore down their banners and placards and ejected the TOM supporters.

These incidents occurred during the TOM Week of Action throughout which the aims of the movement, the immediate withdrawal of British troops from the north of Ireland and for self-determination

Police harass 'Troops Out' lobbyists

COLIN KENNEDY

for the Irish people, were put before Labour MPs all over London.

Despite the harassment and the attempts to intimidate the TOM supporters, the Week of Action managed to push ahead with this task and many MPs entered into discussion with the various delegations on the role of the British Army in the six counties of Ulster.

The response of the MPs however was varied. On one extreme, Hammersmith North MP Frank Tomney refused to see the delegates at his surgery. Similarly, Housing Minister and MP for Brent East, Reg Freeson, stated that he would not discuss matters of national concern in his constituency. A more encouraging response however was to be had from Ian Mikardo, veteran Tribune-ite MP for Tower Hamlets. He expressed sympathy with the arguments of the TOM delegation. Support for "withdrawal to barracks" was the position of Jock Stallard and two Islington MPs. Michael O'Halloran and John Grant said they supported a 'united Ireland'.

In North East London the Haringey and Hackney North branch of TOM, which is composed of the affiliated LP Young Socialist branches in Hornsey, Wood Green and Stoke Newington, met Tottenham's leading left-wing MP Norman Atkinson and the Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour man, David Weitzman. Atkinson said that he "instinctively" sympathised with the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the troops from the north of Ireland but that his own investigations of the situation had led him to the conclusion that a "phased withdrawal" was the better policy. However, he did say the Troops Out Movement's policy statement, "Alternate White Paper" was to be used as the basis of a very important discussion that is about to begin within the ranks of the Tribune Parliamentary group of MPs.

In Hackney North, David Weitzman began his remarks to a delegation which consisted of ten Labour Party and LPYS members by saying that he felt that "Ireland should never have been divided"

and that the British Army should never have been in Ulster in the first place. He agreed that Ireland was one nation and that it had a right to rule its own affairs without interference from a foreign country like Britain. He concluded by saying that "the troops ought to come out" and that he would raise the question in Parliament.

Despite the sinister presence of the police in the incidents mentioned, the Week of Action and the lobbying was a very useful exercise for supporters of the TOM and members of the Labour Party.

sinister presence

Coming in the wake of the highly successful "Troops Out.. Labour Movement Conference" on May 24th, when 326 delegates from Trades Councils, Trades Union branches, Constituency Labour Parties and Labour Party Young Socialists were in attendance, the TOM week of Action represented an attempt to root the debate about the need to get the troops out of Ireland even deeper into the ranks of the Labour movement.

Building on these important successes, socialists and activists within the Labour and trade union movement must now work for a really big campaign in this country in order to get the British army out of Ireland.

INDIA: REPRESSION NOTHING NEW

by LIZ ADAMS

THE PRESENT wave of repression and political scandals in India strike a familiar chord. The conviction of Mrs Indira Gandhi of electoral malpractices in June was the result of a four year court case engineered by her defeated rival in the 1971 elections. But it was only the tip of a well known iceberg. Corrupt political practices are a way of life for the ruling Congress Party. Earlier this year the chief minister for Haryana state was convicted of dealing in illicit import-export licences, dragging down with him a number of other Congress politicians.

Neither is there anything novel about the recent press censorship. Widespread publicity has been given to the clamp-down on press "freedom" following the state of emergency declared on June 25th; but in October 1974 the editor of the leading national paper, the Hindustan Times, was dismissed for his consistent criticism of the Prime Minister. It is the sharp upturn in this criticism in recent months that caused Gandhi to cut power supplies to the press to prevent coverage of the 900 plus political arrests this month.

In the past 18 months, Mrs Gandhi has used her dictatorial powers under the Defence of India Act (popularly known as the Defence of Indira Act) as a vicious weapon against the working class. In May

1974, she ruthlessly suppressed a railwaymen's strike for higher pay, arresting thousands in an attempt to avert action, and when this failed imprisoned 30,000 workers to break the strike. In January this year, a dockers' strike was broken in a matter of hours when the police and army moved in swiftly to shift supplies. Last year, when inflation galloped at 3 per cent a month, wages in the public sector were frozen. What outcry of the death of "democracy" was there in the Western bourgeois press then?

PROGRAMME OF 'REFORM'

Since 1971, when the leader of 'the world's largest democracy' could do no wrong, the popularity of Gandhi and her Congress Party has declined. Despite her declared platform of 'abolition of poverty' and 'self-reliance' for India she has been unable to improve the desperate condition of the poorest people in the world.

In 1970, 40% of the population were officially below the subsistence level of 50p per week. In 1974, 60% was the estimate. Output in vital wheat crops has dropped from 108m tonnes for 1970-71 to 100m tonnes for 1974-5. (The population increased by 60 millions.

Industrial growth is non-existent. Real wages have dropped drastically. Once again planning is in disarray - the new 5th plan was quietly dropped last year. As for self-reliance - an increase of 6 per cent is expected in foreign aid over the next five years. And to add to it, last year was the worst famine in over 30 years.

Although the PM has reiterated her determination to initiate reforms, as always, they are not worth the paper they're written on. Programmes of land, taxation and wage reform are meaningless whilst the real offenders remain unchallenged.

At home, Mrs Gandhi is reluctant to tackle the rich, untaxed farmers, who swell their own pockets by de-

manding high prices, and hoarding grain for high profits rather than sell to the government for public distribution. Meanwhile, millions starve whilst Congress retains the farmers' influential votes. Meagre rations are bought from the inflated markets of USA and USSR. A vast parallel economy of black money props up the coffers of the rich bourgeoisie, of which the ruling party is part. And private investment is geared to meeting the luxury 'needs' of 0.3% of the population.

Token efforts have been made to control tax evasion and the lucrative smuggling business from the West, but at a time when soaring prices cuts into the belts of the middle classes too, these tactics have cost Gandhi support and spearheaded the growth of the reactionary JP Narayan movement, the only effective opposition to Congress power in recent years.

'JP' MOVEMENT

The man who has caused so much heartache to Gandhi is the opportunist politician, JP NARAYAN ('JP'). Returning to active politics after 20 years, he has built his movement on the issues of corruption and electoral reform, aided by Gandhi's recent court case. Since last July, he has built up a massive following to oust the state government of his native Bihar, one of the poorest areas of India. Supported by the well organised right-wing Jana Sangh party, their para-military RSS force, and sponsored by Big Business, he has been acclaimed as the second Mahatma Gandhi. His appeal lies in his 'village revolution' ideal, and his main support has come from students. JP was impressed by the student led uprising in the western state of Gujarat last year, which succeeded in bringing down the Congress state government. Since then, students have been used as his main agitational fodder. Disruptive general strikes in Bihar last year threatened to spread through India, and when JP called on the



Bihar: the poorest Indian state.

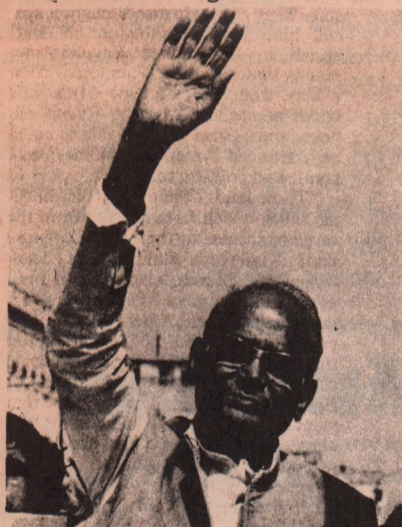
police and army to disobey state orders last month, Gandhi acted swiftly, arresting JP and many of his followers.

DIVIDED LEFT

JP has drawn support from the left as well as the right. Indicative of the total bankruptcy of the left leadership, one of the largest left groups, the Communist Party (Marxist) has jumped onto the JP bandwagon. The official Communist Party of India, indistinguishable from the ruling Congress Party, warned that behind JP "lurk the dark forces of Indian fascism", but their reformist politics have not provided any alternative lead. The CPI-dominated Indian TUC failed to support the rail and dock strikes mentioned above.

The Congress-CPI coalition dominate parliamentary politics, and no effective working class opposition has emerged to combat their unrivalled position. The split in the CP in the mid sixties and the develop-

ment of splinter Maoist groups dedicated to terrorist activities led to the total ruination of the left by the early 70s. The capitulation of both CP groups to socialism through reform has left the working class exposed and vulnerable to reactionary forces such as JP Narayan's movement.

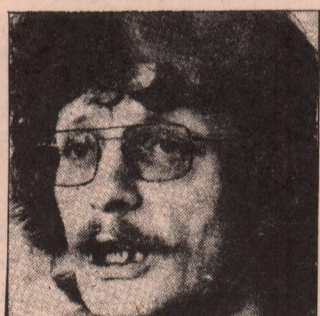


NARAYAN AT RECENT NEW DELHI RALLY

(Prentice continued)

We then asked Tony how long there had been a clash of views between Prentice and the Party?

"There's been disagreements prior to him becoming the MP for Newham N.E. It should be stressed that he's only been MP for Newham N.E. for 18 months. (Prior to that he was MP for East Ham North). One of the first motions of criticism came from Alderman Edwards, chief whip of the Labour group on the Council—hardly a recent Johnny-come-lately—because of his Lib-Lab coalition position. That was in 1971! Ever since his selection in 1971 there's been criticisms—on his actions over London weighting of teacher's pay, the imprisonment of the Pentonville dockers, the imprisonment of the Shrewsbury pickets, and related to that his attitude to people locally when they approached him to lobby over the Shrewsbury 2. He refused to see a lobby on the Shrewsbury 2, and a lobby from the NUT.



Tony Kelly

"Again he was criticised when he made his famous "welshing" speech—a "major" speech made in front of 12 people who heard something totally different from the Press Release he made. He's since admitted he doesn't always speak in accordance with his Press Releases. So he would say one thing to Party members and something else to the Press".

Shortly before the successful vote on 23 July a 'support Prentice' letter was signed by 170 Labour MPs and an unprecedented personal intervention was made by Harold Wilson who strongly opposed the Newham Labour Party's attempts to democratically

remove their union-bashing 'coalition-mongering' MP. We asked Tony Kelly the attitude of the local Party to these interventions.

"The feeling of the Management Committee is apparent from the vote. They were all—apart from 5 or 6 individuals—absolutely appalled at the smear campaign that had taken place."

"It was sheer weight of arguments on the floor of the meeting that increased the support for the motion. This would suggest that Wilson's intervention was irrelevant in Newham N.E. but would possibly be damaging to himself and those like him in other parts of the country."

The news that Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams were planning rallies and meetings in support of Prentice came as no surprise. The statement from the local Tory Party that they may not stand a candidate against Prentice if he stands as an independent, fully confirms the attacks on Prentice as a Tory in Labour's ranks.

Phil Bradbury and Anita Pollcock, two other Newham N.E. CLP members agreed with Tony Kelly that the rules had been obeyed absolutely. "Every meeting took place in the presence of the Senior Regional Organiser and Reg Prentice. Meetings were arranged at his convenience", said Tony. Phil Bradbury also confirmed that the view of the majority of the local Party was of total disgust at the press smear campaign. "If any conspiracy existed it was between the Fleet Street press", said Phil.

Tony Kelly also told us that the support for Newham's fight from the rest of the Labour movement had been overwhelming. As for the need for future support, Tony told us that it should show itself "by Constituency Parties adopting the responsibility that Newham N.E. had done. Look at your MP—if he or she is not a consistent socialist, say you're not satisfied and pass the same resolution we have done, and attempt to select a socialist MP."



Harold Wilson

WILSON AND ABORTION: WOMEN MUST NOT CHOOSE!

By LIZ ADAMS

LABOUR AGAINST HOUSING CUTS CONFERENCE

Recall London Labour Conference

By Kevin Moore

"THE CUTS in housing budgets forced on local Councils by the Labour government, are totally unacceptable.....and we shall fight them at Labour Party conference." So spoke Michael Ward of Shelter at a conference, organised by Camden and other Labour Parties in London last month.

Labour Councils have traditionally failed to solve the housing problem of an everlasting waiting list and now the situation looks really grim. Restrictions in the form of circulars from Crosland, the Secretary of State, have now prevented Councils buying property except in specific Housing Action Areas. Millions of pounds will have to be cut off the money for buying land on which to build.

Unfortunately some speakers saw an answer in cuts in other budgets or from rent increases. MP Douglas-Mann saw the answer in massive tax increases and a new government 'stock' redeemable by the government at a later stage. But speakers hit out hard against this sort of talk. "We've got to return to our Election Manifesto pledges and show people that Labour does really work in the interest of the working class" said one delegate. Other speakers said that it was the government's responsibility to nationalise the banks and finance houses and provide Councils with interest free loans, not to force cutbacks in already inadequate expenditure.

Ken Livingstone of the GLC outlined the effect the cuts will have on the GLC housing programme, where over £100 million would be cut. "But", he said, "we must not adopt an either or approach. When the government says do you want housing or social services cut we must not fall into the trap of trying to work out which is more important, we must oppose all cuts. It is also no answer to

say that we can find the money out of rent increases."



KEN LIVINGSTONE: no cuts

He went on to move a hard-hitting resolution from the conference organisers, including:

- Demanding powers to immediately requisition all empty property.
- Opposing all cuts as a way of solving the present economic crisis.
- Demanding a return to the policies of the GLC and General Election Manifesto of Feb and Oct.
- The setting up of a co-ordinating committee with one delegate from each Labour Party and Labour (Council) Group.

Ted Knight, Chairman of Norwood Labour Party, moved support for the demand of Ilford North Labour Party for a recalled London Labour Party conference, and called for a picket of the Regional Executive to back up this demand. Both resolutions were unanimously carried.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS

All Labour Parties should support the committee and send delegates. Young Socialists, many of whom were absent at the conference must take a full part in this committee and campaign.

NO TO HEALTH CUTS

SUPPORT MCAPP CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 11TH LONDON

IT WILL come as no surprise that the Labour government's cuts do not spare the health service. NHS building programmes are being halted (eg Hammersmith Hospital, W.London) and wards remain closed due to lack of money to buy equipment. At the same time private practice and hospitals are booming.

ORGANISING

Thus MCAPP (the Medical Campaign Against Private Practice) are organising a conference against the cuts in the NHS in London on 11 October.



Union branches are urged to send delegates. Details from: Dr. Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London

A letter received this month from the Prime Minister's office stating the 'official' position to James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill confirms the government's resistance to pro abortion lobbys. Addressed to the organiser of the 'Women's Right to Choose' Campaign, it states that 'Like its predecessors, the government believes that the issues in sensitive areas of human responsibility like abortion must be decided by the individual MPs, on a free vote exercising their own independent judgments.'

So much for representing constituents, and recognising the essential social nature of this question!

The letter goes on to say that 'The Prime Minister...does not agree with those who argue that a woman should be able to demand abortion as a right', and 'The government believes that doctors are the right people to make the decision...' So one of the fundamental rights of women, to control their own bodies and decide when and under what circumstances she should have children, is promptly written off by Wilson! Further, the letter goes on to support private practice 'as a valuable adjunct to the NHS in this field. Perhaps Wilson has forgotten that White's Bill is directed supposedly against abuses in the private sector. Perhaps he is as confused as the Bill's sponsors, Labour MPs Abse and White.

At the time of going to press, the select committee is expected to produce a report at the end of

Hornsey BLACK YOUTH ATTACKED BY POLICE

By Jim Browne
ON THURSDAY, 26 June at Highgate Magistrates Court, black school student, Cliff McDaniel, was convicted of insulting behaviour and assaulting P.C. Ryan David.

The convictions arose out of an incident outside Stationers School Hornsey, where McDaniel is a student. McDaniel was returning home from school one lunch time in April with two friends. While waving to friends across the road a police car drew up beside them. PC David searched McDaniel who co-operated by emptying his pockets and even offered to be searched in the Headmaster's office. At this PC David, who had already adopted a hostile attitude struck McDaniel in the face. Another blow to the kidneys followed. He was then struck to the ground. Even though there were already three policemen present two more vehicles and a further four officers were summoned to the scene. Later Cliff was beaten

July. The likely turn of events is that some form of restrictive abortion legislation will be re-introduced with government, or back-bencher backing, at the beginning of next parliamentary session. Or, the select committee could be reconstituted to consider for example the Lane Report on the 1967 Act. But in the present atmosphere, the former is most probable.

Labour Party delegates to Conference should note the SMA's resolution condemning NHS cut-backs, private practice and supporting abortion on demand: and vote for any other composite resolution in opposition to White's Bill. The National Abortion Campaign conference on 18/19 October must develop an effective campaign to combat the new dangers ahead. Please come and help build the campaign to fight for a women's right to choose.

LEEDS

AT A GMC MEETING on July 18th, South East Leeds Labour Party passed a motion expressing 'total opposition' to the James White Abortion Amendment Bill at present being considered by a Commons Committee. The resolution went on to recognise the anti working-class nature of this proposed legislation which would drastically restrict the limited abortion facilities made legal under the 1967 Abortion Act. The right of all women to abortion on demand was recognised as the only way to prevent working women being faced with the dilemma of unwanted children or back street abortions.

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up again at Hornsey police station and was charged.

In court the prosecution produced two eye witnesses, who were, as if you hadn't already guessed, the other two police officers involved in the attack. The defence, on the other hand produced seven eye witnesses, including two white welfare assistants and a white onlooker.

At the end of the court proceedings, lasting nearly eight hours, those attendance were stunned with disbelief at the decision of the Chairman of the Bench, Mrs Jean Dimcombe. McDaniel was found guilty of both charges, fined £10 and bound over to keep the peace for one year.

The recently formed Black Parents Movement have lodged a complaint with the Lord Chancellor about the decision. An appeal is also to be made.

For more information contact: The Black Parents Movement, 57 Victoria Road, London, N.4.